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NOMINATION OF THOMAS E. COLLINS III

JOINT HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

AND THE

COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND HUMAN RESOURCES UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED FIRST CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

ON

THE NOMINATION OF THOMAS E. COLLINS III TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF LABOR FOR VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

SEPTEMBER 22, 1989

Printed for the use of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and the Committee on Labor and Human Resources

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NOMINATION OF THOMAS E. COLLINS III TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF LABOR FOR VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 1989

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS AND
COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND HUMAN RESOURCES,
Washington, DC.

The committees met, pursuant to notice, at 9:20 a.m., in room SR-418, Russell Senate Office Building, Hon. Alan Cranston (chairman of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs) presiding.

Present: Senators Cranston and Cochran.

Chairman CRANSTON. Good morning. Welcome to this joint hearing of the Committees on Veterans' Affairs and Labor and Human Resources to consider the nomination of Thomas E. Collins III to be the Assistant Secretary of Labor for Veterans' Employment and Training.

Thad, since you may have some other engagement, let me let you make your introduction now, if you'd like, so you can depart to whatever other destinations you have for today.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR COCHRAN

Senator COCHRAN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate your courtesies.

I just wanted to come by this morning to introduce my lifelong friend, Thomas Collins, to you and the members of these committees. He's been nominated by President Bush to be Assistant Secretary of Labor for Veterans' Employment and Training.

He grew up in Utica, MS, very near my home. He now lives in the same community that I live in in Mississippi. He graduated from Utica High School, went to Mississippi State University, joined the Air Force, was commissioned as an officer, and served as a fighter pilot. And he was in Vietnam during the war. His plane was knocked down. He spent 7½ years in a prisoner of war camp in North Vietnam.

I remember when I was elected to Congress in 1972, I knew that Thomas was a prisoner of war in North Vietnam, and I thought about that a good bit as we were trying to support the effort to end that war, bring our POW's home, and get an accounting for MIA's. And one of the great joys of my life, Mr. Chairman, was being a part of a congressional delegation that welcomed the POW's to the U.S. Capitol for a reception in the Rayburn room over in the House of Representatives. I remember seeing Thomas then. It was the

first time I had seen him since we were on the football field competing against one another, he for Utica and I for Byrum High School. But it was a great pleasure to see him.

Since then, he served in the Air Force until 1980. He then retired and came back to Mississippi. He was in business and has served for 7 years in our State as executive director of the Veterans' Farm and Home Board. He's done an outstanding job in our State on behalf of veterans, making sure that their interests were taken into account, and that they were treated fairly by our State government and its agencies.

He and his wife, Donnie, are very close personal friends, and I know that the committee will find that he is very well qualified, indeed, for this position at the Department of Labor. He is a person of honesty and character. He is dedicated. He is courageous. He is a patriot. And I think in every way the committee should find that he is well qualified.

I hope that his nomination will be approved by the committee and that his confirmation will be recommended to the Senate.

I thank you very much for the opportunity to be here and to present him to the committee.

Chairman CRANSTON. Thank you very much, Senator Cochran. We appreciate those words of recommendation.

We are going to have a further hearing after this on other nominations.

OPENING STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN CRANSTON

Tom, a warm welcome to you. My congratulations on your nomination. I'm pleased to note that you're accompanied by your wife, Donnie, and I extend a warm welcome to her. I know how proud she must be of you.

If confirmed, Thomas Collins will be the third person in this position since it was upgraded in 1980 from that of Deputy Assistant Secretary. As Assistant Secretary, Mr. Collins will serve as the Secretary of Labor's principal advisor on all matters affecting veterans' employment, which is an important and integral component of our Nation's commitment to those who have served in the Armed Forces.

As a member for 12 years with the Labor and Human Resources Committee, and as the chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, I've long been deeply involved in efforts to meet the employment needs of our Nation's veterans. Of special concern are all of the Department of Labor's activities that affect veterans' employment and training, especially those related to Vietnam-era veterans, disabled veterans, minority veterans, and homeless veterans.

I further note that there has always been an overlap of two or three Senators serving as members of both the Labor Committee and Veterans' Committee. In the early years it was Jennings Randolph, Bob Stafford, and myself. Now, it's Spark Matsunaga, Strom Thurmond, and Jim Jeffords.

Mr. Collins has a long record of military service as a career officer, beginning as an Air Force fighter interceptor pilot in the Netherlands in 1961. In 1965 he was based as a combat pilot in Thailand. During an October 1965 combat mission Mr. Collins was shot

down and captured as a prisoner of war by the North Vietnamese. He remained in captivity until his release as part of "Project Homecoming" in February of 1973.

After his service, he started and operated his own financial and investment corporation in Mississippi. From 1981 to 1988 he served as executive director of the Mississippi Veterans Farm and Home Board.

As a former prisoner of war, Tom Collins knows well the extent of the sacrifices made by so many to keep our Nation free. Among his military honors and awards, his Silver Star, Legion of Merit, Distinguished Flying Cross, Bronze Star, and Purple Heart attest vividly to his own personal sacrifices.

In closing, I note that the nominee has completed the committee's questionnaire and answered the prehearing questions I submitted, all of which will be printed in the record of today's hearing along with a July 14, 1989, letter from the Office of Government Ethics to the effect that Mr. Collins is in compliance with applicable laws and regulations governing conflicts of interest. Further, I note that I have reviewed the FBI report on the nominee, have found no bar to his confirmation, and fully expect to support it.

[The questionnaire, answers to prehearing questions, and the July 14, 1989, letter appear in the appendix.]

Chairman CRANSTON. Senator Murkowski, our ranking minority member, is unable to be with us for this hearing. His opening statement will appear in the record.

[The prepared statement of Senator Murkowski appears on p. 9.]

Chairman CRANSTON. Pursuant to the rules of the committee, as recently amended, all nominees will be asked to testify under oath.

So, Tom, would you please stand and raise your right hand?

Do you swear or affirm that the testimony you will give to this committee at this hearing today, and any written answers or statements you provide to this committee in connection with this hearing will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

Mr. COLLINS. I do.

Chairman CRANSTON. Tom, in connection with your testimony being under oath today we are asking now, as I advised you we would, that you now submit to the committee, pursuant to the oath that you took earlier, the responses to the prehearing questions that you submitted previously, and that you now acknowledge that these written answers, as well as any you will provide in writing in specific followup to this hearing, are submitted by you under oath.

Do you agree that these responses are being provided, and will be provided, under oath?

Mr. COLLINS. I do.

Chairman CRANSTON. I now have some further questions for you, but do you have any remarks you would like to make at the outset?

TESTIMONY OF THOMAS E. COLLINS III, NOMINEE FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF LABOR FOR VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

Mr. COLLINS. I have, Mr. Chairman, submitted to the committee an opening statement, but I will abbreviate that statement and make a few remarks.

Mr. Chairman, and other distinguished members of the Committees on Veterans' Affairs and Labor and Human Resources, it was a high and humbling honor when I was selected by Secretary Dole and then nominated by President Bush to be the Assistant Secretary of Labor for Veterans' Employment and Training.

I am looking forward to serving the veterans of our country. I appreciate my friend, Senator Cochran, introducing me to the committee today and I appreciate his kind and encouraging remarks. I also appreciate the support of many other Members of the Senate and the House of Representatives.

I have met very often with Secretary Dole, and Deputy Secretary DeArment in the Department of Labor, and we agree on objectives for the Veterans' Employment and Training Service. Secretary Dole is committed to increasing and improving the delivery of employment and training services to veterans, especially disabled veterans.

If confirmed, I will apply all of my management abilities which have been gained through formal education, 27 years of military and Government service, and the good old school of hard knocks to ensure that the mission of the Veterans' Employment and Training Service is carried out. So, I'm looking forward to getting started. I'm excited about the challenges that lie ahead of us in the area of veterans' employment and training.

And, Mr. Chairman, I respectfully request that you approve my nomination for Assistant Secretary of Labor for Veterans' Employment and Training. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Collins appears on p. 13.]

Chairman CRANSTON. Thank you very, very much.

Tom, in response to my prehearing question 7(a), you stated that OMB has included the DVOP's and the LVER's, which are governed by statutory funding formulas, in a residual freeze category that will be applied to a variety of Labor Department programs that the President proposed to freeze in fiscal year 1990 at the overall fiscal year 1989 outlay level. However, in response to question 7(c), as to the difference between the amount requested for the DVOP and LVER programs in the President's fiscal year 1990 budget, and the amount requested for DVOP and LVER programs when they're included in the residual freeze category, you state that you were not aware that any residual freeze will be imposed on the VETS program in fiscal year 1990.

Could you please clarify those two responses? If you wish, you could do so for the record rather than verbally now.

Mr. COLLINS. Perhaps I will need to followup, Senator. But as the written statement says, we will be able to fund the DVOP and LVER programs in fiscal year 1990, as I understand it. If there is some more detail of that, I'll be happy to followup in writing later.

[Subsequently, Mr. Collins furnished information which appears on p. 50.]

Mr. COLLINS. So Veterans' Employment and Training is in good shape in the 1990 budget. And of course, the freeze back to 1989 is actually not in effect yet, as I understand it. And in a more general sense, I certainly am aware of the mandated numbers which require funding of DVOP's and LVER's. That is a grass roots part of our program. That's where the services are delivered. So at this

time and always in the future, realizing that the DVOP's and LVER's are the workers of our organization, they deliver the services. I will always advocate full funding, as mandated, for these programs.

Chairman CRANSTON. Thank you very much.

In response to prehearing question 8, you stated that one of the three most pressing challenges that your agency faces is to assist those recently separated from military service, especially those who are disabled, in making the transition into the work force. In this regard, I authored a provision with Senator Murkowski in S. 13 as reported by this committee, to expand eligibility under the VRA authority to include post-Vietnam era veterans and all veterans with service-connected disabilities rated at 30 percent or more. Would you support that approach?

Mr. COLLINS. Mr. Chairman, I'll support that. I was just informed this morning that the final version, or draft, of S. 13 is completed. I have followed it during its development and am familiar with it, and I fully support it. We are looking forward to it, and think we are doing not only the veterans of our country but our Nation itself and the economy of our Nation a great service by going forward with a proper transition program.

Chairman CRANSTON. Good.

Also in regard to individuals recently separated from military service, you stated in this response that you would like to test more rigidly and then expand a concept known as "transition management". What do you mean by the phrase "test more rigidly"?

Mr. COLLINS. We have very soft data on our pilot projects that have ensued in the past 2 years. I think we need to get a national program which will require some, as I said, more rigid testing, because we need standardization across the country. There are transition management projects going on, even the ones that we are piloting have some differences. So we need, through testing, to develop a program that will serve the Department of Defense, that will include the Department of Veterans Affairs, and the Department of Labor on a national level and not on a local level.

Chairman CRANSTON. S. 13, as reported by the Veterans' Affairs Committee, contains a provision, section 309, which I authored, to authorize the Secretary of Labor to conduct a pilot program by providing employment and training information services primarily through DVOP's and LVER's to service members within the last 6 months of their service. The program would be carried out in from 5 to 10 geographically-dispersed States in which the Secretary determines that services to veterans would not be unduly limited as a result of the pilot program. Would you be generally supportive of that approach?

Mr. COLLINS. Mr. Chairman, I would support that approach.

Chairman CRANSTON. Let me ask you this, what firsthand veterans' employment and training experiences will you bring with you to the Office of the Assistant Secretary that you believe will enable you to improve the Department's efforts to meet the employment and training needs of veterans?

Mr. COLLINS. I have been a businessman, Mr. Chairman, and I realize the importance of a serviceman transitioning back into the mainstream of this Nation's economy. I have not worked at the

State or Federal level directly in employment services; however, I have extensive experience in veterans' affairs in general, and in particular in serving veterans through home mortgage programs, which is not employment. But I think I bring with me the keen awareness that special groups of veterans, even in these times of relatively good veterans' employment, need the services that have been so wisely provided for by the Congress. Our veterans have given much to the service of our country, and I believe they deserve to be welcomed home and back into our Nation's economy. I'm dedicated to that. I feel that I have the management ability and the knowledge of our Nation's businesses and the jobs that veterans should have so that I will be an effective manager and policymaker of the Veterans' Employment and Training Service.

Chairman CRANSTON. Section 2014 of title 38, United States Code, states that it is the policy of the United States to promote the maximum of employment and job advancement opportunities within the Federal Government for qualified disabled veterans and veterans of the Vietnam era. How do you intend to carry out this provision as it relates to Department of Labor employment?

Mr. COLLINS. Mr. Chairman, there are several ways. First, within our Department, our agency, the Veterans' Employment and Training Service will monitor our own Department of Labor for our adherence to veterans' preference and veteran employment rules and promote—the key word is to promote—the employment of qualified veterans. I intend to do this with other agencies of the Federal Government, and I intend as the Assistant Secretary to be the catalyst for working with all agencies of the Federal Government in promoting veterans' employment. And a third area is that we are in the negotiation process with the Office of Personnel Management to finalize the working relationship among all Government agencies in what the Veterans' Employment and Training Service's role should be and what the Office of Personnel Management's role should be. I anticipate, if confirmed, that I will followup very soon with finalizing that memorandum of understanding.

Chairman CRANSTON. Thank you very much.

Page 7 of the written testimony of the AMVETS on your nomination states that AMVETS recommends that the Department of Labor place stand-alone automated labor market information systems in vet centers to assist in job placement for Vietnam veterans. What are your views on that recommendation?

Mr. COLLINS. We are certainly looking at that concept. And I will admit that I'm no expert on it. I have made several site visits and overall I think that we need the Veterans' Employment and Training Services operating in these State employment office systems to serve veterans. We have several programs underway. The COLNA system, which is tied with our transition management and which collects labor market information, will be available. And of course, the National Job Bank concept, which we in Veterans' Employment and Training would only be a part of, is certainly worth further examination and work. In theory it's a great idea so I'm supportive, and we will continue to work in those areas.

Chairman CRANSTON. I'd like to ask you to look into that and give us a written followup response by, say, October 15.

Mr. COLLINS. I will, Mr. Chairman.

[Subsequently, Mr. Collins furnished information which appears on p. 51.]

Chairman CRANSTON. Thank you.

Senator Thurmond is on his way to Charleston this morning to investigate the damage done by Hurricane Hugo and thus cannot be with us as he had planned to be. He's been a great supporter of the Veterans' Employment and Training Service and, of course, authored the legislation establishing the Assistant Secretary position. His statement will appear in the record, and we will have written questions to submit to you.

[The prepared statement of Senator Thurmond appears on p. 11.]

Chairman CRANSTON. I have no further questions for you, so I congratulate you on your nomination. We look forward to acting upon it swiftly and affirmatively. The joint hearing now stands adjourned.

Thank you very much.

Mr. COLLINS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, members of the committee.

[Whereupon, at 9:40 a.m., the committees were adjourned, to reconvene at the call of their respective Chairs.]

APPENDIX

STATEMENT OF SENATOR FRANK H. MURKOWSKI (R-AK) UPON THE NOMINATION OF THOMAS E. COLLINS, III TO BE ASSTSEC OF LABOR FOR VETERANS EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

Good morning.

I would like to welcome you all to this hearing to consider the nomination of Thomas E. Collins, III, to be the Assistant Secretary of Labor for Veterans Employment and Training. Our purpose is to determine Tom's qualifications to fulfill the great responsibility of advocating within the Department of Labor and throughout our society the employment and vocational training interests of our veterans. In my opinion, Tom's record of service to our country speaks for itself:

- A career Air Force fighter pilot (August 1959 to July 1979);
- A Vietnam combat veteran;
- Awarded two Silver Star Medals for valor in combat and two Purple Heart Medals for wounds suffered; and
- Shot down on a combat mission, he was a POW in North Vietnam for more than seven years of unimaginable hardships, torture, and deprivation (October 1965 to February 1973).

RETIRING FROM MILITARY SERVICE SIX YEARS AFTER BEING REPATRIATED, TOM WAS INVOLVED FOR AWHILE IN PRIVATE BUSINESS AFTER WHICH HE RETURNED TO PUBLIC SERVICE AS A CONGRESSIONAL CANDIDATE FROM MISSISSIPPI AND LATER AS A CONSULTANT ON VETERANS' ISSUES TO THE SECRETARY OF LABOR.

TOM NO DOUBT UNDERSTANDS THAT ONCE HE ASSUMES HIS NEW DUTIES IT WILL BE UP TO HIM TO EXERT THE FULL AUTHORITY OF HIS OFFICE TO ENSURE THAT VETERANS ARE EMPLOYED. WE CAN TALK OF "EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES" AND "TRAINING FOR MEANINGFUL EMPLOYMENT", BUT THESE ARE EMPTY PHRASES IF VETERANS DON'T FIND WORK. THE GOOD NEWS, HOWEVER, IS THAT IF ANYONE CAN SATISFY THE DEMANDS OF THE VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT ISSUE, IT IS TOM COLLINS. HIS BACKGROUND IS CLEARLY ONE OF COURAGE, RESOURCEFULNESS, AND RESILIENCE, THE VERY TRAITS NEEDED BY THE PERSON WHO WILL LEAD THE WAY.

TOM HAS THE DEDICATION AND THE COMMITMENT TO OUR NATION AND ITS VETERANS TO DO THE JOB HE HAS BEEN NOMINATED TO DO. I ASK MY COLLEAGUES TO SUPPORT HIM IN THIS ENDEAVOR BY CONFIRMING HIM.

STATEMENT BY SENATOR STROM THURMOND (R-SC) BEFORE A JOINT HEARING OF THE VETERANS AFFAIRS AND LABOR AND HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEES REFERENCE NOMINATION OF THOMAS COLLINS III TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR VETERANS EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING AT THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, SEPTEMBER 21, 1989, 9:15 A.M., SR-418.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

As a member of both the Veterans Affairs Committee and the Labor and Human Resources Committee, I am pleased to be here this morning for a joint hearing to consider the nomination of Tom Collins to be Assistant Secretary of Labor for Veterans' Employment and Training. I am also pleased that after the joint hearing is finished, the Veterans Affairs Committee will consider the nominations of Raoul Carroll to be General Counsel of the Department of Veterans Affairs, Edward Timperlake to be Assistant Secretary for Congressional and Public Affairs, Allen Clark to be Assistant Secretary for Veterans Liaison and Program Coordination, and S. Anthony McCann to be Assistant Secretary for Finance and Planning. All of these men are fine nominees, and I am pleased to have them with us today.

I have a longstanding interest in the position of Assistant Secretary of Labor for Veterans' Employment and Training and its function in our society. Helping the veterans of this Country find employment--whether its after they separate from the service, or when they come upon hard times--is a most important function of the Assistant Secretary.

I am pleased to have been the sponsor of legislation back in 1980 which established the office of Assistant Secretary, and I am pleased with the nominee appearing before the two Committees today.

Mr. Chairman, our nominee this morning is a decorated Vietnam War veteran, having received the Silver Star with Oak Leaf Cluster, the Legion of Merit, the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Bronze Star, and many other medals. While on a combat mission in 1965, he was shot down and held as a Prisoner of War by the North Vietnamese from 1965-1973.

Subsequent to his military career, he became the owner and president of a financial and investment corporation, and later was named Executive Director of the Mississippi Veterans Farm and Home Board. Most recently, he was a Congressional candidate for the Fourth Congressional district seat in Mississippi.

Mr. Chairman, as a veteran and as the former Executive Director of the Veterans Farm and Home Board, Mr. Collins will bring with him a direct understanding of the needs of veterans. I am pleased to offer my support.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you for convening this joint hearing. I have just a few questions to ask at this time.

STATEMENT OF THOMAS E. COLLINS III

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE
ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

SEPTEMBER 22, 1989

MR. CHAIRMAN AND DISTINGUISHED MEMBERS OF THE SENATE VETERANS AFFAIRS AND LABOR AND HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEES, IT IS A HIGH AND HUMBLING HONOR TO HAVE BEEN SELECTED BY SECRETARY DOLE AND NOMINATED BY PRESIDENT BUSH TO SERVE THE VETERANS OF OUR COUNTRY AS THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF LABOR FOR VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING.

I AM DEEPLY GRATEFUL TO SENATOR COCHRAN AND SENATOR LOTT [AND SENATOR MCCAIN] FOR PRESENTING ME TO THE COMMITTEE AND FOR THEIR KIND AND ENCOURAGING REMARKS. I ALSO APPRECIATE THE SUPPORT GIVEN TO ME BY OTHER MEMBERS OF THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, ESPECIALLY MY LONG-TIME FRIEND CONGRESSMAN SONNY MONTGOMERY. INDEED HE IS MY ROLE MODEL FOR THE SERVICE HE HAS RENDERED TO AMERICA'S VETERANS.

I THANK THE MANY VETERANS AND REPRESENTATIVES FROM ALL OF THE VARIOUS VETERANS' SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS--MANY OF WHOM I HAVE KNOWN FOR YEARS AND OTHERS I HAVE ONLY MET RECENTLY--FOR THEIR SUPPORT.

IF CONFIRMED BY THE SENATE, I SHALL ALWAYS STRIVE TO CONDUCT MYSELF AND THE BUSINESS OF THE VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

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SERVICE IN A MANNER THAT MERITS THE CONFIDENCE ALL OF THEM HAVE PLACED IN ME.

I AM PLEASED TO HAVE MY FAMILY PRESENT WITH ME TODAY AND WOULD LIKE TO INTRODUCE THEM TO THE COMMITTEE. (INTRODUCTION OF FAMILY).

THE MOST GRATIFYING AND MOTIVATING WORK I KNOW IS SERVING THOSE WHO HAVE SERVED THEIR COUNTRY IN BOTH WAR AND PEACE. ALL VETERANS DESERVE OUR RESPECT AND GRATITUDE. THE BEST EXPRESSION OF OUR GRATITUDE IS A WARM "WELCOME HOME." THE BEST WELCOME HOME MESSAGE IS TO THANK OUR VETERANS FOR THEIR MILITARY SERVICE--WE NEEDED AND APPRECIATED THEIR COMMITMENT. NOW THEY DESERVE A JOB--A GOOD JOB! AND WE NEED THEIR DEDICATION AND EXPERIENCE IN THE WORK FORCE. FORTUNATELY, MOST VETERANS TRANSITION SMOOTHLY INTO CIVILIAN LIFE. MANY TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE VARIOUS VETERANS ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS SO WISELY PROVIDED FOR BY CONGRESS.

BUT, FOR A NUMBER OF OUR VETERANS, THAT TRANSITION IS MOST DIFFICULT--AT TIMES SEEMINGLY IMPOSSIBLE. THERE ARE OBSTACLES BEYOND THEIR CONTROL WHICH KEEP THEM OUT OF THE MAINSTREAM OF OUR SOCIETY. THESE ARE THE VETERANS I AM PARTICULARLY CONCERNED ABOUT--DISABLED VETERANS, HOMELESS VETERANS AND THOSE WHOM, BECAUSE OF LACK OF TRAINING AND COUNSELING, OPPORTUNITY HAS PASSED BY.

THE VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICE HAS A GOOD TRACK RECORD OF JOB PLACEMENTS. CERTAINLY, MANY VETERANS HAVE FOUND GOOD JOBS THROUGH OUR PROGRAMS. HOWEVER, I AM PARTICULARLY GRATIFIED THAT SO MANY OF OUR RESOURCES ARE NOW TARGETED ASSISTING DISABLED AND DISADVANTAGED VETERANS. THIS IS AN AREA WHERE WE CAN AND WILL WORK HARDER TO ENSURE THAT ALL VETERANS HAVE ACCESS TO OUR SERVICES AND THAT WE DO EVERYTHING WE CAN TO HELP PLACE THEM INTO THE WORK FORCE.

I BELIEVE ALSO THAT BETTER ASSISTANCE TO SERVICEMEMBERS TRANSITIONING FROM MILITARY SERVICE INTO THE CIVILIAN JOB FORCE CAN PREVENT VETERAN UNEMPLOYMENT SITUATIONS IN THE FUTURE. THE TRANSITION MANAGEMENT PROJECT WILL PROVIDE SERVICEMEMBERS, BEFORE THEY LEAVE ACTIVE DUTY, WITH SUFFICIENT VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE TO ALLOW THEM TO MAKE INFORMED CAREER CHOICES AND WITH THE NECESSARY ARRAY OF EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICES TO CARRY OUT THOSE CHOICES.

DURING THE PAST SEVERAL MONTHS, I HAVE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO STUDY AND BECOME FAMILIAR WITH THE OPERATIONS OF THE VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICE. I AM AWARE OF THE BACKGROUND AND HISTORY OF BOTH VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT NEEDS AND THE AGENCY DESIGNED TO MEET THOSE NEEDS. I APPLAUD THE MEMBERS OF THIS COMMITTEE, THE MANY OTHER CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS, THE VETERANS' SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS, AND PAST ADMINISTRATIONS FOR HAVING THE WISDOM AND FORESIGHT TO RECOGNIZE THE NEEDS OF THOSE WHO SERVED

AND IMPLEMENT THE MANY PROGRAMS THAT HELP VETERANS MOVE BACK INTO THE MAINSTREAM OF AMERICA'S ECONOMIC LIFE. IN PARTICULAR, I COMMEND SENATOR STROM THURMOND WHO TOOK THE INITIATIVE TO INTRODUCE LEGISLATION TO ESTABLISH AN AGENCY DESIGNED TO SERVE THE SPECIAL EMPLOYMENT NEEDS OF VETERANS.

I HAVE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN FROM BOTH PREVIOUS ASSISTANT SECRETARIES, WILLIAM PLOWDEN AND DONALD SHASTEEN, WHO HAVE SHARED THEIR EXPERIENCES WITH ME. EACH OF THEM HAVE CONTINUOUSLY MADE IMPROVEMENTS TO VETS PROGRAMS AND HAVE SUGGESTED STILL-NEEDED IMPROVEMENTS TO ME. I WISH TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO COMMEND THEM. IF CONFIRMED, I PLAN TO CONTINUE FINE TUNING VETS PROGRAMS. WE NEED TO IDENTIFY THE PROBLEMS FACED BY CHRONICALLY UNEMPLOYED GROUPS OF VETERANS, HOMELESS VETERANS, UNDEREMPLOYED VETERANS, AND SPECIALLY DISABLED VETERANS, AND FOCUS OUR RESOURCES ON THESE GROUPS.

THE VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICE IS SMALL IN RELATION TO MOST FEDERAL AGENCIES IN TERMS OF BUDGET AND STAFFING; HOWEVER, THE TASK FACING US IS LARGE. VETS HAS A CADRE OF DEDICATED EMPLOYMENT PROFESSIONALS LOCATED IN THE NATIONAL OFFICE, TEN REGIONAL OFFICES, AND IN EACH STATE OFFICE. DIRECT SERVICE IS PROVIDED BY THE DISABLED VETERANS' OUTREACH PROGRAM SPECIALISTS (DVOPs) AND LOCAL VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT REPRESENTATIVES (LVERs), WORKING THROUGH THE STATE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE AGENCIES. THEY DO A GOOD JOB. IF CONFIRMED, HOWEVER, I

PLAN TO ENHANCE THESE RESOURCES BY REACHING OUT TO A WIDE VARIETY OF OTHER RESOURCES TO LEVERAGE ASSISTANCE FOR VETERANS WITH EMPLOYMENT NEEDS. I INTEND TO DO THE UTMOST TO DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN PRODUCTIVE WORKING RELATIONSHIPS WITH VETERANS' SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS, EMPLOYER GROUPS, LABOR UNIONS, THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS, OTHER GOVERNMENT AGENCIES, AND PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYMENT ASSOCIATIONS. BY WORKING TOGETHER WE CAN ENSURE THAT OUR VETERANS ARE "WELCOME HOME" AND BACK INTO PRODUCTIVE EMPLOYMENT. WE CAN FACILITATE THE TRANSITION OF OUR QUALITY SERVICEMEN INTO PRODUCTIVE CIVILIAN JOBS. WE CAN MAKE THE VETERAN JOB SEEKER WHAT HE REALLY IS--A SELF-MOTIVATED, TOUGH MINDED, DISCIPLINED PERSON WHO, WITH CERTAIN ADJUSTMENT TRAINING, IS THE TYPE OF EMPLOYEE OUR NATION'S BUSINESSES NEED.

SINCE COMING TO THE LABOR DEPARTMENT, I HAVE HAD MANY DISCUSSIONS WITH SECRETARY DOLE AND DEPUTY SECRETARY DeARMENT CONCERNING THE VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICE. WE ARE IN AGREEMENT ON OBJECTIVES. SECRETARY DOLE IS COMMITTED TO INCREASING AND IMPROVING THE DELIVERY OF EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICES TO ALL VETERANS, PARTICULARLY DISABLED VETERANS. IF CONFIRMED, I WILL APPLY ALL MY MANAGEMENT ABILITIES GAINED THROUGH FORMAL EDUCATION, 27 YEARS OF MILITARY AND GOVERNMENT SERVICE, AND THE SCHOOL OF "HARD KNOCKS", TO ENSURE THAT THE MISSION OF THE VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICE IS CARRIED OUT.

MR. CHAIRMAN, MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE, I AM EXCITED ABOUT THE CHALLENGES THAT ARE BEFORE US, AND I RESPECTFULLY ASK FOR YOUR APPROVAL OF MY NOMINATION AS ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF LABOR FOR VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING.

THANK YOU.

STATEMENT FOR COMPLETION BY PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEES

PART I: ALL THE INFORMATION IN THIS PART WILL BE MADE PUBLIC

Name: Collins (LAST) Thomas (FIRST) (OTHER)

Present address: Rte. 5, Box 851 Jackson (CITY) MS (STATE) 39205 (ZIP CODE)

Position to which nominated: Assistant Secretary of Labor for Veterans' Employment & Training Date of nomination: 6/22/89

Date of birth: 27 (DAY) 12 (MONTH) 37 (YEAR) Place of birth: Utica (Hinds), Mississippi

Marital status: Married Full name of spouse: Donnie Katherine

Names and ages of children:

Martin	Travis	Collins	25
Edward	Noel	Collins	23

Education:

Institution (including city and State)	Dates attended	Degrees received	Dates of degrees
Mississippi State University	1955-1959	B.S.	1959
University of Southern Mississippi	1974-1975	M.B.A.	1975
Troy State University	1978		
Jackson State University	1980		
Armed Forces Staff College	1973-1974		

Honors and awards: List below all scholarships, fellowships, honorary degrees, military medals, honorary society memberships, and any other special recognitions for outstanding service or achievement.

Silver Star with Oak Leaf Cluster; Legion of Merit; Distinguished Flying Cross; Bronze Star; Air Medal; Meritorious Service Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster; Air Force Commendation; Vietnam Service Medal; Republic of Vietnam Medal; Prisoner of War Medal; Purple Heart with Oak Leaf Cluster

Memberships: List below all memberships and offices held in professional, fraternal, business, scholarly, civic, charitable, and other organizations for the last five years and any other prior memberships or offices you consider relevant.

Organization	Office held (if any)	Dates
See Attachment		

Employment record: List below all employment (except military service) since your twenty-first birthday, including the title or description of job, name of employer, location of work, and inclusive dates of employment.

3/80-8/81 Owner/President, Collins Financial & Investments Corp., 633 North State Street, Jackson, MS. Reference: Robert S. Matthews.

8/81-3/88 Executive Director, Mississippi Veterans Farm & Home Board, P.O. Box 115 (Woolfolk Bldg.) Jackson, Mississippi, Reference: Harold E. Jones.

3/88-11/88 Congressional Candidate, Fourth District, 133 E. McDowell Road, Jackson, Mississippi. Reference: Evelyn McPhail.

Military service: List below all military service (including reserve components and National Guard or Air National Guard), with inclusive dates of service, rank, permanent duty stations and units of assignment, titles, descriptions of assignments, and type of discharge.

8/59-6/61 USAF pilot training--Lackland AFB, TX; Bainbridge AB, GA; Webb AFB, Big Spring, TX; Perrin AFB, Denison, TX;

6/61-6/64 F-102 Fighter Interceptor pilot, 32nd Ftr. Inter. Sq., Soesterberg AB, Holland (The Netherlands); Commander: Col. Alma R. Flake, Grand View, Ar.

Military service:
CONTINUED

List below all military service (including reserve components and National Guard or Air National Guard), with inclusive dates of service, rank, permanent duty stations and units of assignment, titles, descriptions of assignments, and type of discharge.

6/64-8/65 TAC Fighter Pilot, 68 TFS, 8 TFW, George AFB, CA;

Commander: Col. David Shaw, Apple Valley, CA.

8/65-10/65 TAC Combat Pilot, 68 TFS (TDY) Korat AB, Thailand;

Commander: Stillman V. Taylor, Austin, TX.

10/65-2/73 POW in North Vietnam. Shot down on combat mission

18 October 1965 and returned in project "Homecoming" on 12 Feb. 1973.

2/73-5/75 Attended the Armed Forces Staff College, Norfolk, VA and

MBA degree, University of S. Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS.

5/75-6/78 Instructor/Commandant of Cadets, USAF, AFROTC, Det. 432,

Southern Station, Hattiesburg, MS. Supervisor: Hugh D. McCracken.

6/78-7/79 Chief of Curriculum, AFJROTC, USAF, Air University,

AFROTC, Maxwell AFB, AL. Supervisor: M/Gen. David Easson.

Government experience:

List any advisory, consultative, honorary, or other part-time service or positions with Federal, State, or local governments other than those listed above.

3/89-Present Consultant to Secretary of Labor Elizabeth Dole regarding veterans' issues.

Published writings:

List the titles, publishers, and dates of books, articles, reports, or other published materials you have written.

None (except work-related materials)

Political affiliations and activities:

1. List all memberships and offices held in and financial contributions and services rendered to any political party or election committee during the last 10 years.

Thomas Collins Congressional Campaign Committee—1988, Candidate and Assistant Treasurer

2. List all elective public offices for which you have been a candidate and the month and year of each election involved.

Congressional candidate, Mississippi Fourth District—1988 Primary (March)

Congressional candidate, Mississippi Fourth District—1988 General (Nov.)

Future employment relationships:

1. Indicate whether you will sever all connections with your present employer, business firm, association, or organization if you are confirmed by the Senate.

Yes, with the exception of retaining membership and vested interest in the Mississippi State Public Employees Retirement Fund.

2. State whether you have any plans after completing government service to resume employment, affiliation, or practice with your previous employer, business firm, association, or organization.

No

3. What commitments, if any, have been made to you for employment after you leave Federal service?

None

4. (If appointed for a term of specified duration) Do you intend to serve the full term for which you have been appointed?

Yes

5. (If appointed for an indefinite period) Do you intend to serve until the next Presidential election?

Yes

Potential conflicts of interest:

1. Describe any financial arrangements, deferred compensation agreements, or other continuing financial, business, or professional dealings which you have with business associates, clients, or customers who will be affected by policies which you will influence in the position to which you have been nominated.

None

2. List any investments, obligations, liabilities, or other financial relationships which constitute potential conflicts of interest with the position to which you have been nominated.

None

3. Describe any business relationship, dealing, or financial transaction which you have had during the last five years, whether for yourself, on behalf of a client, or acting as an agent, that constitutes a potential conflict of interest with the position to which you have been nominated.

None

4. Describe any lobbying activity during the past 10 years in which you have engaged for the purpose of directly or indirectly influencing the passage, defeat, or modification of any Federal legislation or for the purpose of affecting the administration and execution of Federal law or policy.

None

5. Explain how you will resolve any potential conflict of interest that may be disclosed by your responses to the above items. (Please provide a copy of any trust or other agreements involved.)

None

Testifying before the Congress:

1. Do you agree to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Congress upon the request of such committee?

Yes

2. Do you agree to provide such information as is requested by such a committee?

Yes

Thomas E. Collins III--Attachment (page 1 of 2)
Social Security Number 427-76-1318

MEMBERSHIPS:

Membership From	Name of Organization	Nature of Affiliation	Location
7-76 to present	Air Force Association	Member	1750 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W. Washington, D.C. 20006
2-73 to present	American Legion	Member	1608 K Street, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20006
7-76 to present	American Ex-POW's	Member	3201 E. Pioneer Parkway #40 Arlington, Texas 76010
3-89 to present	American Veterans of World II, Korea and Vietnam (AMVETS)	Member	4647 Forbes Boulevard Lanham, Maryland 20706
2-73 to present	Disabled American Veterans	Member	807 Maine Avenue, S.W. Washington, D.C. 20024
5-80 to present	International Trade Club of Mississippi	Member	P. O. Box 16353 Jackson, Mississippi 39236
6-83 to present	American Vietnam Veterans of Mississippi	Member	P.O. Box 8518 Jackson, Mississippi 39204
2-73 to present	NAM/POWS Association	Member	5305 Basswood Austin, Texas 78723
6-75 to present	Order of Daedalians	Member	Building 1660 Kelly AFB, Texas 78241
2-73 to present	Red River Valley Fighter Pilots Association	Member	6237 South Greenwich Road Derby, Kansas 67037

2-79 to present	Reserve Officers Association	Member	One Constitution Avenue, N.E. Washington, D.C. 20002
8-75 to present	Retired Officers Association	Member	201 North Washington Street Alexandria, Virginia 22314
8-55 to present	Sigma Phi Epsilon	Member	209 West Franklin Street Richmond, Virginia
1-82 to present	The Military Order of the Purple Heart of the USA, Inc.	Member	5413-B Backlick Road Springfield, Virginia 22151
2-73 to present	Veterans of Foreign Wars	Member	200 Maryland Avenue, N.E. Washington, D.C. 20002
2-88 to present	Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association	Member	421 Aviation Way Fredrick, Maryland 21701
5-59 to present	Mississippi State University Alumni Association	Member	P. O. Drawer AA State Campus, Mississippi 39762
6-75 to present	University of Southern Mississippi Alumni Association	Member	Southern Station Hattiesburg, Mississippi 39401
1-87 to present	The Military Order of the World Wars	Member	435 North Lee Street Alexandria, Virginia 22314

United States
Office of Government Ethics
P.O. Box 14108
Washington, D.C. 20044

JUL 14 1989

The Honorable Alan Cranston
Chairman
Committee on Veterans Affairs
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

In accordance with the Ethics in Government Act of 1978, I enclose a copy of the financial disclosure report filed by Thomas E. Collins, III, who has been nominated by President Bush for the position of Assistant Secretary for Veterans Employment and Training, Department of Labor.

We have reviewed the report and have also obtained advice from the Department of Labor concerning any possible conflict in light of the Department's functions and the nominee's proposed duties. Based thereon, we believe that Mr. Collins is in compliance with applicable laws and regulations governing conflicts of interest.

Sincerely,

Frank Q. Nebeker by D.O.
Frank Q. Nebeker
Director

Enclosure

Statement Of

ROBERT L. JONES
AMVETS NATIONAL EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Before The

Joint Hearing of the Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs

and

The Committee on Human Resources

On

The Nomination of the Honorable Thomas E. Collins, III,
to be the Assistant Secretary of Labor for Veterans
Employment and Training (ASVET)

9:15 a.m., Friday, September 22, 1989
Room 418, Russell Office Building

Mr. Chairman, members of the combined committees, as National Executive Director of the American Veterans of World War II, Korea and Vietnam (AMVETS) I consider it a privilege to comment on the nomination of Mr. Thomas E. Collins, III, to be the Assistant Secretary of Labor for Veterans Employment and Training. Mr. Collins has repeatedly distinguished himself in service to this nation, enduring considerable injury and degradation while proudly maintaining his personal high standards and integrity. His dedication to America's veterans cannot be questioned, nor can his commitment to the nation.

Mr. Collins has accepted the challenge of becoming the National Veterans Advocate within the U.S. Department of Labor at a point when on the surface it would appear America's veterans have approached the goal of full employment. Data provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics deceptively reflects a positive image of the overall veterans employment trend. Significant pockets of our constituents, in particular the disabled, minority and combat veterans, remain unable to obtain the necessary vocational training to achieve meaningful employment. Mr. Collins, upon accepting the position of Assistant Secretary for Veterans Employment and Training, will not be provided an over abundance of resources to accomplish his mandated responsibilities. His focus and priorities must be on those who have endured the horrors of battle and suffer the pains of unemployment.

Many veterans, in particular those age 55 to 65 years of age, are being displaced as a result of technological advancement, plant closures and obsolete skills. Those accepting "early retirement" find themselves required to seek secondary income to subsidize their meager retirement. These aging veterans require considerable retraining to be competitive in a rapidly changing labor market. Many have dropped completely from the labor force and are no longer included in statistical reports. Mr. Collins and his staff will be required to seek out innovative approaches to assist this group of veterans. In view of the extremely limited veterans specific programs currently available I am certain that this effort will include a dialogue with the Social Security Administration to explore a means to ease present income restrictions. These older veterans will require special consideration in education and vocational training programs. Thus, Mr. Collins must revitalize floundering Department of Education veterans programs.

Veterans are a product of federal service and the demands placed upon them and their families are monumental. It is unfortunate that the proposed mechanisms to assist the estimated 300,000 veterans who depart the military each year are a blur of good intentions, expectations and responsibilities. Pilot programs established by U.S. Department of Labor and the United States Army have not received the appropriate oversight, nor have they produced desirable results. There is a need to assist recently

separating veterans, in particular the disabled and their families, to re-enter the labor market. This effort will require a commitment of not only the Department of Labor, but Department of Defense, Department of Veterans Affairs, the Social Security Administration and Office of Personnel Management resources that are necessary to ensure young, talented servicemen and women presently overlooked are not allowed to sink into the stagnant pool of unemployment. Current proposals by the Office of Assistant Secretary for Veterans Employment and Training (OASVET) are a beginning but require legislation, staff oversight, accountability, marketing and more importantly, commitment of all the agencies previously mentioned.

The role Mr. Collins will have within Department of Labor will tax his diplomacy as he pursues the mandates of his position in relationship to other Department of Labor programs. With the erosion of the Veterans Job Training Act, veterans were victimized by a lack of meaningful training programs. Title II and Title III Job Training Partnership Act program administrators traditionally have turned a blind eye to the needs of veterans. Veterans generally are not a reportable item within the Job Training Partnership Act system thus services to veterans are not held accountable. Economic Dislocated Worker Assistance Program, draft regulations contain vague references to veterans. The National Academy of Sciences report on validity generalization (VG) recommendations, if implemented, will effect

the method of service delivery throughout the employment service. The development of regulations and legislation concerning these programs will require Mr. Collins to actively exert the authority of his office to ensure veterans receive the preferential services they so deservedly earned in defense of our nation.

It is encouraging to note that Secretary of Labor, Elizabeth Dole, has provided greater access to the Assistant Secretary for Veterans Employment and Training than has been previously enjoyed. It is hoped that she will visibly include the recommendations of the Secretary's Committee on Veterans Employment in her policy development process and provide feedback to the veterans advocates serving her in an advisory capacity.

There has been a continuing dialogue concerning the development of a national policy addressing veterans employment and training. This debate began in April, 1987 and has fermented sufficiently. It warrants the full attention of Mr. Collins in order to clearly establish the direction of all Veterans Employment and Training Programs in the years following 2000. We cannot afford to continue to procrastinate on this important issue. AMVETS continues to view this as the most important, singular issue to be resolved by the Office of Assistant Secretary for Veterans Employment and Training.

The status of our service delivery mechanism, the United States

Employment Service (USES), has reached a critical stage. Budget reductions, antiquated automation systems and staff purges have seriously depleted the labor market exchange system. Federal Unemployment Tax Act (FUTA) resources are in abundance but are held captive, not utilized, for their intended purpose. The ASVET must seek a means to assist in the preservation of the USES without infringing upon the mandated tasks of the Local Veterans Employment Representative (LVER) and Disabled Veteran Outreach Specialist (DVOP). We, in AMVETS, believe that the ASVET should seek the support of the Administration in the provision of an annual United States Employment Service budget of at least 900 million dollars appropriated from FUTA funds. This is required to shore up the sagging USES and ensure our delivery system remains intact. Of this 900 million dollars 10 percent should be retained by the ASVET for use as Veterans Employment and Training incentive grants for those states who excel in serving their veterans population. These veteran incentive grants should be in addition to the existing Job Training Partnership Act, Title IVC Grant Monies and the current appropriations provided for the LVER/DVOP staffing.

Mr. Collins' managerial skills will be essential to reestablish a open dialogue with his field staff, revitalizing their confidence and focus. They must be provided the necessary resources to accomplish their pyramiding mandated responsibilities. The OASVET structure must be stabilized and oriented specifically

to provision of services. We are certain Mr. Collins will lead by example in providing employment and advancement opportunities for veterans, in particular the disabled. The debate concerning transfer of his office to the Department of Veterans Affairs and its impact upon the existing service structure has caught the attention of the Administration, as well as the veterans community. We, in AMVETS, do not believe that this proposal represents a viable alternative to fulfill the employment and training needs of the majority of our nation's veterans. We are not convinced that such a move will enhance services, nor represents the best use of our extremely limited appropriations. We are convinced that Mr. Collins' managerial and administrative skills must be aggressively applied to resolve the historical administrative and service delivery deficiencies that have been allowed to develop and subsequently have stimulated the proposal to transfer his agency to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Projects to subsidize veterans employment and training service staff through the use of automation systems while a viable concept will require considerable foresight in the development of the network. The OASVET has initiated several projects to test the use of automation systems. We, in AMVETS, strongly encourage Mr. Collins to ensure that these projects are closely coordinated under the auspices of the interagency agreement between the Department of Veterans Affairs and yet to be developed Office of Personnel Management memorandum of understanding. He must

incorporate their services as well as their automation approaches to enhance the overall veterans employment and training capabilities. In this period of austere budgeting we cannot afford to have various agencies developing parallel systems that accomplish the same task. They must be fully coordinated and integrated. The placement of such automated systems must be scrutinized carefully. We concur with the proposal to place stand alone automated systems at military installations where large populations of individuals are leaving the service. We wholeheartedly believe that the systems must also be placed at the Department of Veterans Affairs Veterans Outreach Centers. A substantial number of the clientele who utilize these medical facilities inquire about employment and training assistance. A significant number are minority, disabled, combat theater Vietnam veterans who endure tremendous barriers to employment. The Department of Labor and the Department of Veterans Affairs must ensure that every effort is exerted to assist these individuals in obtaining meaningful employment.

Significant effort has been exerted in the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Veterans Employment and Training to promote veterans re-employment rights and services to the National Guard and Ready Reserve. AMVETS recognizes that members of the Ready Reserve and the National Guard play a critical role in the total force concept of the Department of Defense. We believe that assistance should be provided to these members as "other eligibles"

within the priorities established by law. We do not support the provision of veterans preference to members of the Guard and Reserve who do not meet the current definition of "eligible veterans" and will adamantly oppose any effort by the Assistant Secretary to advance preferential services to the Guard and Reserve at the expense of America's combat veterans. Due to the rapid turnover experienced by many National Guard and Reserve units and conflicts that develop between individual Ready Reserve and Guard members with their employers, we suggest that the Assistant Secretary for Veterans Employment and Training consider establishing employment assistance programs at major National Guard and Reserve command headquarters as resources permit.

We are encouraged by the nomination of Mr. Collins to the position of Assistant Secretary for Veterans Employment and Training and look forward to working with him in this capacity. He is highly respected throughout our ranks and is held in high esteem as a professional, dedicated to resolving the plight of our nation's veterans. We recognize that his administrative and managerial skills will be tested during his term. As we proceed into the future I pledge the support of my office to work closely with Mr. Collins and his staff to improve programs and services to our nation's veterans. Mr. Collins and his staff are an integral part of the veterans community and it is imperative that we maintain a continuing, candid, two way dialogue at all levels of our respective organizations. Though we retain the

privilege of expressing the concerns of our membership, we stand committed to our service to America and will assist Mr. Collins in confronting the task at hand.

Mr. Chairman, members of the combined committees, we encourage early confirmation of Mr. Thomas E. Collins, III as Assistant Secretary of Labor for Veterans Employment and Training.

from the office of

Senator Edward M. Kennedy

of Massachusetts

**STATEMENT OF SENATOR EDWARD M. KENNEDY
ON THE NOMINATION OF THOMAS E. COLLINS III
TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF LABOR FOR
VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING**

For Immediate Release:
September 22, 1989

I would like to thank the chairman of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, Senator Alan Cranston, for holding this hearing on the nomination of Thomas E. Collins to be Assistant Secretary of Veterans' Employment and Training. As chairman of the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee which shares jurisdiction with the Veterans' Affairs Committee on this position, I look forward to reviewing the transcript of today's proceedings.

Throughout our nation's history, America's veterans have risked their lives to defend our country. In recent years, however, many of us have failed to remember the sacrifices made by these proud men and women. In the decade of the 1980's, we have listened to multitudes of media accounts decrying the sad state of America's veterans and the infrastructure that serves them. Homelessness and unemployment are perhaps the most tragic of the problems afflicting those men and women who should be in the prime of their careers. With a firm commitment by the federal government, I am confident it is within our grasp to provide the job training skills which will enable these individuals to once again proudly serve our nation.

The position of Assistant Secretary for Veterans' Employment and Training is sure to be a daunting challenge for Mr. Collins. His background indicates that he is no stranger to overcoming seemingly impossible obstacles. Putting all of our nation's veterans who can work and who want to work back on the payroll through innovative job training and placement will be no easy task. But as we approach the next century, it is more important than ever that our nation's workforce be prepared and ready to meet the challenges we face. I am confident that Mr. Collins will have an important role to play in preparing a segment of our population for that daunting task.

Pre-Confirmation Hearing Answers
Submitted by Assistant Secretary of Labor for
Veterans' Employment and Training-Designate
Thomas E. Collins III
to The Honorable Alan Cranston

1. The Assistant Secretary of Labor for Veterans' Employment and Training (ASVET) is mandated by section 2002A of title 38, United States Code, to be the principal advisor to the Secretary of Labor with respect to the formulation and implementation of all departmental policies and procedures to carry out chapters 41, 42, and 43 of title 38, as well as other Labor Department employment, unemployment, and training programs to the extent they affect veterans. This position was elevated from the deputy-assistant-secretary level by section 504 of Public Law 96-466, enacted on October 17, 1980. One of the purposes of elevating the position to the Assistant Secretary level was to ensure that the incumbent would have the visibility and status necessary to carry out the responsibilities mandated by law.

A. How do you intend to carry out the responsibilities of the ASVET so as to function as the advocate for veterans' employment and training within the Department of Labor (DOL)?

1.A. As a member of Secretary Dole's executive staff, I will be actively involved in all departmental management decisions. I will work diligently to ensure that veterans' issues are given appropriate emphasis in all Labor Department programs and initiatives.

B. What role would you envision for yourself as an advocate for veterans' employment and training outside of the DOL--such as government-wide or with private-sector employers, for example?

1.B. I see the Assistant Secretary for Veterans' Employment and Training as taking a pro-active role as an advocate for the hiring of veterans, particularly disabled veterans. Within government, I would work closely with the Office of Personnel Management in outreach efforts to disabled, Vietnam-era and other veterans. As a dedicated Vietnam combat veteran who has owned my own business, I will actively promote private sector support for veterans' employment through relations with private employers and employer groups.

C. (i) What discussions have you had with the Secretary of Labor regarding your having direct access to her, and what was the outcome of those discussions?

1.C.(i) I have direct access to the Secretary and have held many meetings with her, discussing veterans' employment issues and other matters at her request and mine. She has made it clear that she is especially sensitive to the needs and problems of disabled veterans, our top priority group.

C. (ii) What discussions have you had with the Secretary regarding your role in the coordination of Department of Labor activities under section 402(c) of the Veterans' Benefits and Programs Improvement Act of 1988, and what was the outcome of those discussions?

1.C.(ii) While I have not specifically discussed the Economic Dislocated Worker Adjustment Assistance Act (EDWAA) with Secretary Dole, I have discussed it with Assistant Secretary Jones of the Employment and Training Administration (ETA). I have reviewed the current steps which are being taken by the Assistant Secretary for Veterans' Employment and Training (ASVET) and have found them both aggressive and potentially effective. For example, the Assistant Secretary has written twice to all of the Governors of the States and is now receiving replies assuring their cooperation in active efforts at the State and local level to serve veterans who are dislocated workers as a special target group. I believe veterans will receive both preference and services as provided under the EDWAA.

D. What will be your relationship with the Assistant Secretary of Labor who oversees the Employment and Training Administration with regard to the effect of those programs on veterans?

1.D. I have already met with and established a cooperative working relationship with Roberts T. Jones, Assistant Secretary for Employment and Training (ETA). He has assured me of his interest in veterans' employment and training services, and we have discussed ways of more effectively delivering services to veterans through the

Department of Labor in partnership with the States. Additionally, I have met key ETA staff and discussed a variety of employment and training issues in which we have mutual interests and concerns.

E. What arrangements have you made to ensure that you will be consulted by other Assistant Secretaries within the Department on issues within their respective areas of responsibility which may affect veterans?

1.E. I have had several occasions to meet and work with the other executive staff members in the Department of Labor. I intend to work closely with the Assistant Secretary for Employment Standards regarding the Federal Contractor programs, the Solicitor regarding veterans' re-employment rights cases and veterans' employment programs, and the Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management with regard to Labor Department programs and initiatives.

2.A. In connection with the administratively-created position of Deputy Assistant Secretary of Labor for Veterans' Employment and Training, which has been vacant since April 23, 1988, what are the Department's plans for filling this position?

2.A. The Deputy Assistant Secretary for Veterans' Employment and Training will be filled by Secretary Dole in the near future. This is an important position with a key role in the operation of the Veterans' Employment and Training Service.

2.B. If the Department plans to fill the position, when does the Department expect to do so?

2.B. As soon as possible. Excellent candidates are currently being interviewed.

2.C. Will the position be classified as an excepted position or a career position?

2.C. The position of Deputy Assistant Secretary has been filled since its creation as an excepted position; there are no plans to change this policy.

2.D. Are there any other proposals under consideration to modify the organizational structure of the Office of the ASVET? (If yes) Please describe them.

2.D. Prior to my introduction to the staff in the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Veterans' Employment and Training, a reorganization proposal was prepared for Departmental consideration. Pending confirmation of a new Assistant Secretary, all discussions of new organizational structure have been postponed. Should a reorganization be necessary to facilitate communication and lines of function and authority, I will discuss the proposal with the Congress and veterans' service organizations after appropriate consultations with Departmental management and union representatives.

3. What are the Department's plans in regard to the current position of executive director, Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) and the incumbent in that position?

3. I've had the opportunity to meet all of the agency's top management staff and hope that all will stay with the agency in a rewarding capacity. The incumbent currently holding the temporary position of Executive Director is a valuable member of the senior staff, and I look forward to continuing to work with him in a top management position.

4. Section 2002A(b)(3) of title 38 generally requires the Secretary of Labor, through the ASVET, to ensure that maximum effectiveness and efficiency are achieved in providing services to veterans under DOL programs by coordinating and consulting with the Secretary of Veterans Affairs with respect to VA programs, with particular emphasis on (a) readjustment counseling activities carried out under section 612A of title 38, (b) apprenticeship or other on-job-training programs carried out under section 1787 title 38, and (c) rehabilitation and training activities carried out under chapter 31 of title 38. What views do you have on how VA and DOL can work together in these programs to address the needs of veterans?

4. The Memorandum of Understanding signed by Secretaries Dole and Derwinski on Monday, July 17, 1989, is just the beginning of a new highlighted working relationship between the Department of Labor and Department of Veterans Affairs. Through training VA and DOL/SESA personnel in veterans benefits at the National Veterans Training Institute (NVTI), services to veterans throughout the country will be enhanced.

Additionally, I am very excited about developing new processes with both the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs for assisting disabled

veterans as they transition from active duty to civilian life.

5. Certain statements have been attributed to you in regard to a meeting of the Regional Directors for Veterans' Employment and Training (RDVETs) which was held in Washington, D.C., on June 29, 1989.

A. Did you address the participants at such a meeting?

5.A. I addressed the Veterans' Employment and Training Service Regional Administrators at a meeting held on June 29, 1989 with closing remarks.

B. (If so) It has been alleged that you said to RDVETs, in regard to discharging your duties as ASVET, that you will be heavily involved in the reelection of President Bush. DId you make such a statement?

(i) (If so) What did you mean by it?

(ii) (If not) Do you have any explanation as to how anything that you did say to the RDVETs could have been so construed?

5.B. Although my exact words cannot be recalled, I regret my remarks were perhaps misinterpreted. My impromptu remarks were designed to quell speculation that I intended to run again for Congress. As reinforcement, I emphasized my pride in being nominated to be the Assistant Secretary for Veterans' Employment and Training by President Bush and my commitment to the agency, its personnel, and the veterans we all serve. I added that, if confirmed, I planned to remain as agency head for the four years of President Bush's Administration and hopefully eight years should he be re-elected.

I have consulted with a number of persons present for those informal closing remarks and they recall no offensive political remarks and more importantly, understood my point--I am not campaigning for political office and politics are not to be a part of the professional conduct of the agency.

6. On page 59 of the "Independent Budget" for veterans programs for fiscal year 1990, it is recommended that the functions of the ASVET be transferred to the Department of Veterans Benefits (not Veterans Benefits Administration) of VA?

A. What are your personal views on the proposal?

6.A. I have an open mind on the subject of VETS moving to the VA. It appears to be very complicated. I welcome an open dialogue to publicly examine all aspects of the proposal and hope that all participants in the dialogue have the best and most economical service to veterans at heart.

B. (i) Does the Department of Labor have an official position on it?

6.B(i) The Department of Labor has no official position on the matter.

B. (ii) (If so) Please provide this position.

6.B(ii) Not applicable.

7. In regard to the fiscal year 1990 DOL budget proposal for veterans' employment and training programs, page 12 of the written testimony of the current ASVET before our Committee on March 6, 1990, indicates that such programs are included in a "residual freeze category", i.e., in the block of programs totaling $136 billion in fiscal year 1989 that the President proposes to freeze at the overall fiscal year 1989 outlay level.

A. Is it your understanding that the Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) and the Local Veterans' Employment Representative (LVER) programs, which are governed by funding formulas in Chapter 41 of title 38, United States Code, are included in this freeze category?

A. It is my understanding that OMB has included the DVOP and LVER programs in a "residual freeze category" applied to a variety of DOL programs.

B. (If yes) What is your personal view as to how these programs can be classified as discretionary given the statutory formulas for them?

B. The number of Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program specialists and Local Veterans' Employment Representatives are determined by formula in Chapter 41 of Title 38 U.S.C. according to state veteran populations and are funded accordingly. These programs do not operate alone, however, but are part of the national labor market exchange system which delivers priority services to all veterans. I am committed to

providing the best possible services to veterans with the resources available but we must all work together in support of the deficit reduction efforts of the Bush Administration and the Congress.

C. For DVOPs and LVERs, what is the difference between the amount requested for these programs in the President's FY 1990 budget and the amount requested for these programs when these programs are included in the residual freeze category?

C. I am not aware that any residual freeze will be imposed on VETS' FY 1990 budget.

D. Do you personally support the VETS funding level and the DVOP/LVER funding level requested in the Reagan budget as being adequate to provide quality employment and training services to veterans and eligible persons? Would you recommend any increases?

D. I am very pleased with the FY 90 budget for VETS and the funding level for the DVOP/LVER programs. Furthermore, President Bush included an additional $600,000 for homeless veterans into VETS' FY 1989 budget which is being put to excellent use.

E. What efforts will you make in regard to both the FY 1990 and FY 1991 budgets to ensure DVOP and LVER funding in accordance with the statutory formulas?

E. I will make every effort to support DVOP and LVER funding in accordance with the statutory formulas.

8. Based on your current knowledge of the mission of the VETS, what do you believe are the three most pressing challenges and what strategies do you intend to consider to address these matters?

8. I believe the three most pressing challenges are:

1. Employment of special disabled veterans. I have learned with interest of VETS recent work with IBM to place severely disabled veterans in long-term training slots in high technology computer programming. I hope to expand the IBM pilot and will work closely with other industries to create new opportunities for special disabled veterans.

2. Rehabilitation and employment of homeless veterans. It is clear that the Homeless Veterans

Reintegration Project (HVRP) model for assisting homeless veterans is very successful, and I will aggressively look for new resources to expand the program.

3. Transition into the job force of recently-separated veterans, especially those who are disabled. I am looking forward to improving significantly the transition of disabled veterans to civilian employment and training opportunities. Further, I would like to more rigidly test and then expand the "Transition Management" concept. If pre-separation counseling proves to be worthwhile as a means of reducing unemployment among recently-separated veterans, I would like to see the program available to all separating servicemembers on a permanent basis, thus reducing potential serious threats to employability and ensuring that an appropriate transition program is in place should differing needs arise as the military services adjust their force structure from time to time.

9. Having personally experienced the readjustment that a former prisoner of war must make, what thoughts do you have as to how the DOL might improve employment and training services for former P.O.W.s?

9. Ex-POWs are provided services under existing programs. I know of no special needs among Ex-POW's since any particular group of POW's has had many years to adjust. However, I do recognize that DOL, through VETS, should have a contingency plan for the special readjustment and reemployment of POW's as the need might arise in the future. A transition management program could be modified to meeting the potential special needs of POWs.

10. In the past, the Congress has observed some apparent instances of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) cutting the funding which VETS believed was necessary and which it had requested for its various programs. As ASVET, what special effort would you make to ensure that OMB approves such fundings requests and, if it does not, seek approval from the Secretary of Labor for an appeal of such cuts?

10. I will always support and make every effort to justify to the Office of Management and Budget the needs of the agency and will hasten to seek an appeal approved by the Secretary of Labor should significant differences occur.

11. What are your views on the report of Workforce 2000 and America's Veterans: A National Forum on Veterans' Employment and Training Issues, submitted to the Labor Secretary's Committee on Veterans' Employment (SCOVE), in September 1988 and the undated review of the Forum findings entitled Workforce 2000 and America's Veterans: Report of the Secretary's Committee on Veterans' Employment which was transmitted to me by the ASVET on June 26, 1989?

11. I read with interest the findings of the Workforce 2000 and America's Veterans: A National Forum on Veterans' Employment and Training Issues and the analysis of veterans' employment and training needs in Workforce 2000 and America's Veterans Report of the Secretary's Committee on Veterans' Employment (SCOVE). The Forum participants identified a number of issues, some underscored by the in-depth study of current veterans' employment data and projected employment trends as described in the SCOVE's report. I intend to use the SCOVE's report as an important planning tool as we develop long-range plans for future agency programs and initiatives.

12. In regard to the veterans' reemployment rights program, what are your views on the new "early conciliation/mediation conference" procedures now being pilot-tested in three Department of Labor regions?

12. Preliminary results from the new "early conciliation/mediation conference" indicate that veterans, National Guard and reserve members and employers are better served through these new procedures. I am pleased that the new veterans' reemployment rights training module is in place at the National Veterans Training Institute (NVTI) and look forward to the day when all VETS staff can be of full assistance to any veteran who calls with an employment problem.

13. Under section 738 of the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act of July 22, 1987, the VETS has established projects nationwide to assist homeless veterans.

A. Are you familiar with this relatively new aspect of DOL-funded services?

B. To what extent will it receive your personal attention?

13.A-B. Secretary Dole and I are concerned and place a high priority on responding to the homeless

veterans problem. In fact, we are both appalled that veterans are a higher than appropriate percentage of our nation's homeless and hope to focus increased resources and attention to the problem.

14. A. What first-hand veterans' employment and training observations and experiences will you bring with you to the Office of ASVET that you believe will improve the Department's efforts to meet the employment needs of veterans?

B. What ideas do you have at this time for improvements in those efforts?

14.A-B. In addition to those pockets of veterans who are unemployed, I believe that veterans tend to be underemployed. There appears to be no Federal focus on quality jobs.

1) Separating soldiers should receive a professional transition into the national civilian job force.

2) Increased involvement between service associations, employer groups and veterans' service organizations can identify key employers of veterans through job fairs and symposia.

3) Many disabled veterans, especially severely handicapped, consider themselves "out" of the job force; these veterans should be specifically targeted for assistance.

15. A. What plans do you have for establishing and maintaining relationships with veterans' service organizations, especially in terms of keeping these organizations regularly advised regarding significant developments which take place within VETS or have an effect on it?

A. I am a long-standing member of the 14 leading military and veterans' organizations and have recently had the opportunity to call on many veterans' service organizations to discuss veterans' employment issues. I look forward to working with all groups, particularly veterans' service organizations, to promote veterans' employment. I am particularly interested in learning about local veterans' service organization activities on behalf of veterans' employment.

B. Do you plan to seek the advise and counsel of these organizations on major issues?

B. I strongly believe in timely, credible and clear communications. I will communicate with the veterans' service organizations and expect them to communicate with me. We may not always agree but at least we will understand each other as fellow veterans.

C. (i) Do you plan to have regular periodic meetings with these organizations' representatives?

(ii) (If so) With what frequency?

C. I would like to meet informally with the veterans' service organizations with a national employment program at least monthly. Further, I welcome all veterans advocates to "stop by for coffee" or call whenever the schedule permits. This is in addition to the quarterly meeting of the Secretary's Committee on Veterans' Employment.

FOLLOWUP QUESTIONS FROM CHAIRMAN CRANSTON TO

MR. COLLINS AND THE RESPONSES

Question 1. Tom, in response to my pre-hearing Question 7.A., you stated that O.M.B. has included the DVOPs and LVERs, which are governed by statutory funding formulas, in a "residual freeze category" that will be applied to a variety of Labor Department programs that the President proposes to freeze in Fiscal Year 1990 at the overall Fiscal 1989 outlay level.

However, in response to Question 7.C. as to the difference between the amount requested for the DVOP and LVER programs in the President's F.Y. 1990 budget and the amount requested for DVOP and LVER programs when they are included in the "residual freeze category", you stated that you are not aware that any residual freeze will be imposed on the V.E.T.S. budget in F.Y. 1990.

Could you please clarify these two responses?

Answer:

My answers, though seemingly contradictory, are not, and both answers are correct. In answer to the first question (7.A.), I correctly stated that the DVOP and LVER program had been included in the residual freeze category. This answer was intended to be definitional only, and not intended to imply that the programs themselves had been frozen for FY 1990 at the FY 1989 level. My understanding of the residual freeze concept is that funding, as a whole, for all programs -- not just DOL but all programs -- included the residual freeze category would be frozen at the FY 1989 level. In other words, while individual programs -- such as the DVOP/LVER programs -- within that category might request higher or lower funding levels than FY 1989, the overall funding level requested for that entire category of programs would not exceed the FY 1989 level.

Thus, my answer to the second question (7.C.) was also correct. The funding level for the DVOP/LVER programs was not affected by the residual freeze, even though they were included in that category. I can only surmise that some other program or programs within the overall residual freeze category were cut to offset this.

Question 2. Page seven of the written testimony of the AMVETS on your nomination states that AMVETS recommends that the Department of Labor place stand-alone automated labor market information systems in Vet Centers to assist in job placement for Vietnam veterans. What are your views on this recommendation?

Answer:

I personally agree with the suggestion that the Department of Labor test offering automated employment assistance to veterans through Vet Centers. I am pleased that, as part of Phase III of the three year Multi-State Job Bank pilot program, Assistant Secretary Shasteen had agreed to test the Civilian Occupational Labor Market Information System (COLMIS) at two Vet Centers located in Region III. This has yet to be discussed with the Department of Veterans Affairs and no particular sites have been designated. If the pilot proves successful, we will explore with the Department of Veterans Affairs expanding this capability to other Vet Center sites. However, there are several hundred Vet Centers throughout the country, and VETS alone does not have sufficient funds to provide this capability to all those sites.

WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR THURMOND TO

MR. COLLINS AND THE RESPONSES

Question. The success of the veterans employment and training programs depends to a large extent upon the operations in the field, through the work of State Directors and Assistant Directors.

Are you committed to providing the necessary funds to carry out activities in the field, not only with respect to the job descriptions of field personnel, but also where special needs appear in local offices?

Can you also give us an indication of what your commitment will be to travel funds for those in the field?

Response:

I agree that the success of the VETS is largely dependent on the activities of the field staff, and it is critical that the field get the resources they need to do their jobs.

I am committed to targeting the agency's resources to ensure that the entire agency is strong and expect to continue the agency practice of allocating 80% or more of the appropriated travel funds to the field staff. Further, I will delegate greater authority and discretion to the field management to decide how to utilize travel funds.

Question. I understand the Labor Department has greatly expanded the use of computers in the Veterans' Employment and Training Service. Certainly computers are becoming increasingly important, but we cannot overlook personal contact with the veteran.

Can you give us an indication of what your commitment to people resources will be, as compared to the use of computers?

Answer:

I have no intention of allowing VETS to de-emphasize or "overlook" personal contact with the veteran. Quite to the contrary, I will be asking our field staff to increase their personal efforts on behalf of veterans and particularly increase contact with disabled veterans.

People resources in VETS are not in competition with resources devoted to automation. VETS automation efforts are designed to make more information available to field and National Office staff in a more timely manner, thus increasing the effectiveness of personal contact with veterans. In fact, I view our efforts to expand the availability and use of computers and office automation as supplementing and supporting our people resources, not supplanting them.

Question. I know there are many, many reports that you will be required to submit as Assistant Secretary. These reports are, in turn, generated by workers in the field.

If OMB requires you to cut personnel in the Employment and Training Service, there will be less people to prepare the reports that are required.

In the event of a reduction in personnel, could you reduce the number of field reports currently required?

Answer:

Many field reports are required by law or regulation, or are necessary for VETS and the Congress to ensure that funds are being appropriately spent on behalf of our nation's veterans. Such reports must be maintained irrespective of VETS' staff levels. However, I will work to ensure that all field reports are necessary, and that the information reported is used effectively. In this vein, I will also ensure that the computer capabilities currently being established in VETS are used to reduce the reporting burden on the field staff.

Question. It is important that as Assistant Secretary of Labor for Veterans' Employment and Training, you have direct access to the Secretary of Labor, Elizabeth Dole. It is important that she hear directly from you about the needs of veterans.

Can you tell us whether you will have complete and direct access to the Secretary.

Answer:

Since coming to the Labor Department, I have had many discussions with Secretary Dole and Deputy Secretary DeArment concerning the Veterans' Employment and Training Service. We are in agreement on objectives. Secretary Dole is committed to increasing and improving the delivery of employment and training services to all veterans, particularly disabled veterans. I have direct access to the Secretary and have held many meetings with her, discussing veterans' employment issues and other matters at her request and mine. She has made it clear that she is especially sensitive to the needs and problems of disabled veterans, our top priority group.

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